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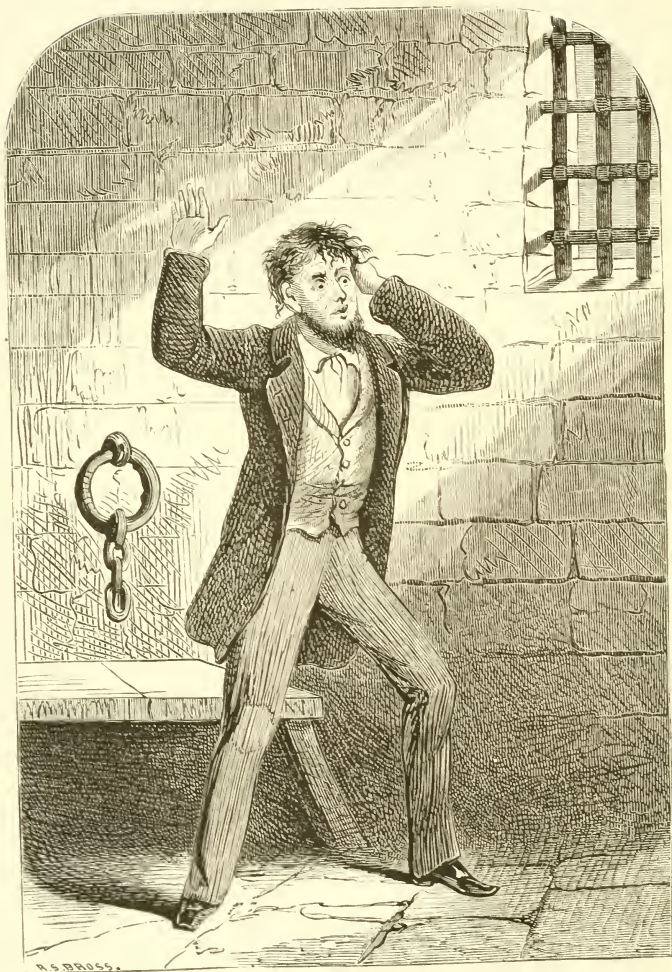












THE RUM MANIAC. Page 24.

# THE RUM FIEND,

*AND OTHER POEMS.*

BY

WILLIAM H. BURLEIGH.



NEW YORK:

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—  
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# THE RUM FIEND.

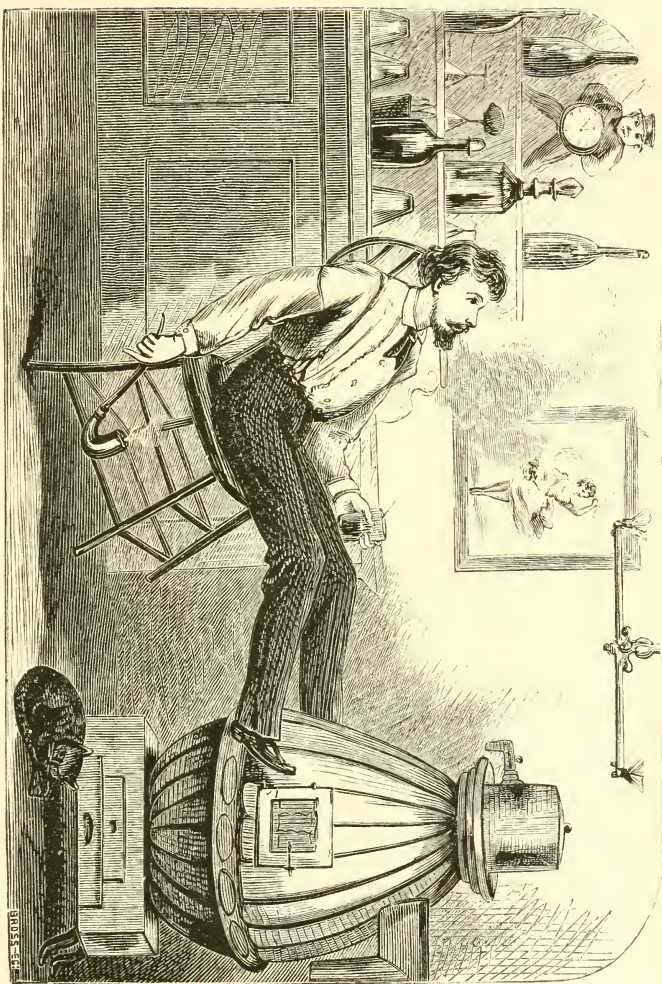
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'TWAS a cold, rough night in the month of March—  
The clouds were scudding athwart the sky,  
And the sprites that dwell in the boughs of the larch  
Moaned, as the moaning winds swept by ;  
And here and there through the stormy rack  
A star would gleam (like a sleepy eye  
Just glimpsing out ere the lid falls back),  
Then the rifts would close, and the mist drift by.

It was past the time, by an hour or two,  
When ghosts walk forth—if the tales are true  
That pleased and tortured our childhood's brain,  
As tales never please nor torture again,  
For, as older we grow—it is always thus—  
We lose our faith in the marvellous ;  
And the more we know, the less we care  
For the spirits of earth or the spirits of air ;  
Or for *any* spirits, unless we think  
They are something nice in the way of drink.

On such a night, at an hour so late,  
Toasting his heels by a well-filled grate;  
Serene as a clam at the full of the tide,  
With an air that said, "I am satisfied,"  
A grog-seller sat, with his pipe and his mug,  
As snug as a bug in the folds of a rug;  
Now daintily sipping some strong hot stuff,  
Now watching the smoke as, puff by puff,  
Lazily up from his lips it rolled,  
Veiling his face with its fleecy fold,  
While a dubious scent, and a twilight gloom  
Which seemed the shade of a coming doom,  
Gathered and settled throughout the room.  
The dingy walls, but an hour before,  
Had echoed the songs and wild uproar  
Of a drunken gang—say, a dozen or more—  
Who had guzzled enough for at least three score;  
For wild and long had their revel been,  
With oath, and curse, and jest obscene,  
And songs as vile and almost as mean  
As the liquor they drank—which was not overclean—  
And many a bumper of terrible stuff,  
Raw and rough, and fiery enough  
To kill a dragon, however tough,  
Down their throats did the idiots pour,  
And shrieked for more, till the hideous roar  
Rattled the windows and shook the door,  
As if Bedlam below with its imps ran o'er;





"TOASTING HIS HEELS BY A WELL-FILLED GRATE." Page 6.

BR055-101



Yet still they sang, and shouted, and laughed,  
And quaffed as they swore, and swore as they quaffed,  
Till oaths were stuttered with every draught.

Tables and chairs, to the noisy tune,  
Went whirling away in a wild rigadoon;  
Bottle and toddy-stick, tumbler and spoon,  
Seemed mad as "the cow" that "jumped over the  
moon;"

Glasses were ringing, corks popping and whizzing,  
Bourbon was flowing, champagne was fizzing,  
And louder and louder the din grew each minute,  
Till the grog-seller swore that the devil was in it:  
Nor was he *forsworn*, for his impship *was* there,  
In drinker and drink, like a beast in his lair.  
Few places can please him as well as a dram-shop,  
Where he'd feel quite at home as a cod in a clam-shop

As drunk as aldermen, one by one,  
The roystering fools to their homes had gone,  
Both the sharps and the flats, with a brick in their  
hats,

To sprawl on the floor or to snore on their mats,  
And to dream of that place and its horrible sights  
Where they don't rake up the fire o' nights,  
To wake on the morrow to shame and to pain,  
Hands trembling, eyes bloodshot, and dizzy of brain,  
Not wiser, it may be, but sadder,

To curse their own folly, and haply to know  
That the dregs of their cup are contention and woe,  
And, though bright are its foam-beads, coils darkly  
below

The deadly and venomous adder.

Drowsily rang the watchman's cry,  
"Past four o'clock, and a cloudy sky!"  
And came from afar, on the still air borne,  
The cock's shrill welcome to the morn;  
But the worker of ill sat wakeful still  
(If the saints don't watch, the sinners will),  
Keeping his vigils religiously;  
And he winked and he blinked with a knowing look,  
And from his cigar the ashes shook,  
Then letting it rest in his finger's crook,  
A sort of survey of his talents he took,  
And hugged himself prodigiously;  
And 'twas easy to see by the gleam in his eyes  
That he said to himself, "'Tis a pleasant surprise,  
In a world full of fools, to find one who is wise  
Like *me*, for example, who, come this or that,  
Knows what will turn up, and just what he is at."

Then he spoke outright, with a chuckle low,  
"Ho! ho! I know what a jolly rum-go  
May be made out of fellows half-tipsy or so,  
Who, to all sorts of wheedling, can never say 'No!'"



How, at such mellow times, they will shell out their  
dimes,

As if 'saving' were really 'the meanest of crimes.'

And guzzle, egad! till they're stupid or mad,

Or their money is gone, or their credit is bad,

Or the stuff has run out, and no more can be had.

Now, here, let us see what the profits may be

Of this night's debauch—not to them, but to *me*,

For *I* always do well from a regular spree;

And the spree-ers—ha! ha!—but the country is free!

Six fives—and a ten—and another V—

Eight ones—four twos—and a ragged three,

Make—sixty-four—and a dollar more

I have just set down to old Tippleton's score.

Pretty good for one night! And besides, it's *so* funny

To hear, as they tipple my whiskey-made wine,

The bibulous fools call it 'nectar divine,'

And stutter its praises

In all sorts of phrases,

And all sorts of tones from a grunt to a whine.

Well, 'tis good enough bait for such innocent tunny;

But the best joke of all is, that *I* get the money!"

A laugh that had never a tone of mirth,

And nothing of heaven and little of earth,

From his thin lips slowly bubbled forth,

Dry, bitter, and sardonic.

Who heard it had thought that he grudged to share

His conscious greed with the tell-tale air,  
That the miser-plague, long nursed with care,  
And obstinately chronic,  
Had cankered his heart in every part  
Till it could not feel for another's smart.  
'Twas a fiendish chuckle, as if from within  
Laughed to each other the imps of sin  
To think of the souls they were sure to win  
Through the grog-shop's intervention;  
While over *his* face there came a glow  
Very suggestive of—something below,  
Which neither of *us* would care to know,  
And *I* do not care to mention.

When that ghost of a laugh—I should say, its eclipse—  
That distorted had flitted away from his lips,  
And the lines of his face stiffened back, as of old,  
To their former expression, hard, stony, and cold,  
You could read in his features this creed: “For  
myself

I believe in one God, and his name is *Pelf*!  
I believe in one worship—the worship of *Pelf*;  
And in *two*, for that matter—of *Pelf* and of *Self*!”  
That was just what his *face* said; and he, “I have  
set

For these very tame pigeons a very strong net.  
They are meshed, without doubt, and I'll pluck them  
all yet.

Why *not*? 'Tis a *duty* to feather my nest  
When my chance is as good as the best of the best,  
And Providence smiles so benignly on me;  
As for '*conscience*'—oh! fol de rol! fiddle deedee!

"Of course, *they* are simple—the fellows who come  
Night after night for a taste of my rum,  
Careless and easy, with lots of the 'tin.'  
Why, how they *do* tipple when once they begin;  
And some hate to go out who could scarce be  
coaxed in.

When they get to that point, I can do as I please,  
And squeeze 'em and turn 'em, and turn 'em and  
squeeze,

Till the last drop of moisture—that's money—slides  
through

Their fingers to mine, and I've done with the crew—  
Done 'em *brown*, but they look most essentially *blue*.  
Now, there's young Jerry Gump—what a rum 'un is  
he!

And the way he takes juleps is pleasant to see,  
For the farm his wife brought him will soon come  
to me.

She—the sweet little fool—when she gave him her  
hand,

Said, 'Take with it bank-stock, and houses, and  
land.'

He took them, and *I* will, as certain as fate,  
If he'll just go ahead at his present mad rate—  
And he *shall*—while there's juleps! Reform is too  
late!

“Then there is my mortgage on Templeton's lot:  
'What a pity,' say some, 'that the fellow's a sot!'  
'What a godsend,' say I; in a fortnight or so  
I shall foreclose, and then *out* he must go.  
But zounds! won't his wife have 'a taking-on'  
When she finds that their 'pretty, sweet cottage' is  
gone!

Dropt into my pocket, from time to time,  
Dollar by dollar, and dime by dime;  
How she *will* blubber, and snivel, and sigh!  
But business is business, so what care I?  
I'd be a fool to abandon my prize  
For a few salt drops from a woman's eyes!  
'Tis a favorite trick with the precious dears  
On every occasion to pump up tears.  
Mothers and daughters, and sisters and wives  
Study hydraulics the most of their lives,  
And devote the rest of their nights and days  
To a thousand other bamboozling ways.

“Now, there's May Jones—by the way, old Jones  
Will soon be down on his marrow-bones;

He has drunk up his cow—he has guzzled his pig—  
And swallowed in bumpers his horse and his gig;  
And to-night—ha! ha!—’tis a capital joke—  
He pawned for whiskey his daughter’s cloak,  
So I think the poor noodle is almost broke;  
And after this week he must pay up his score,  
And throw down the cash if he gets any more,  
Or I’ll boot him politely outside of my door.

“Bill Gibson has murdered his boy, they say—  
A bright little lad—but his face was so sad  
That it made one doubt if he ever were glad.  
He was here with his father but yesterday,  
And the poor boy was trying to coax him away,  
But the bloody old bloat was determined to stay.  
And he *did*, till at last he was tight as a fool,  
All rum and tobacco, and drivel and drool;  
And when I rebuked him, ‘Just stick to your trade,  
Said he, ‘nor find fault with the *thing* you have made.  
You and your master are very nice chaps,  
But both may as well quit preaching, perhaps.’

“’Twas a Christian virtue in me, no doubt,  
That I didn’t kick the rascal out;  
But I thought, on the whole, to be patient were wise,  
For he pays pretty roundly for all that he buys,  
And he buys rather largely, and so is a prize.



But, in spite of my meekness, some people have said  
That the poor boy's blood is on my head;  
That *I* made the father a madman and sot.  
Well, may be I did, and may be *not*.  
For sure they can see, unless blind as a bat,  
That if *I* didn't sell he could buy of old Nat,  
And get equally tipsy on this or on that.  
My business is *lawful*, then who can object?  
My morals, 'the license' declares, are correct.  
I ask, then, why *should* I abandon my trade  
While the statute sustains and a profit is made?  
Besides, if I rightly the inference draw,  
The Gospel is with us as well as the law;  
For didn't St. Timothy say to St. Paul,  
'Take a drop of old Bourbon—'twouldn't hurt ye at  
all' ?  
And the 'pos'les on Sundays went swigging of  
'corn';  
And the Book says that 'Zadoc the priest took a  
horn';  
And Noah, just after he landed from sea,  
Disgusted with water, went off on a spree;  
And Lot, fresh from Sodom, believed it no sin  
To call for his gin at the very first inn,  
To cheer up his spirits, his health to promote,  
And the odor of brimstone to clear from his throat.  
Such saintly examples, all gleaned from the Bible,  
Prove rum-selling right and the Maine Law a libel.

People differ, of course, for I know some prodigious  
Hard drinkers who always, when drunk, are religious.  
Others act, I am sorry to say, like the dickens,  
If only half-fuddled beneath their own roofs,  
Or here under mine, as I daily have proofs.  
But I say, as the ass did that danced with the chickens,  
'Every one for himself, and look out for my hoofs.'

"But, as Satan hates water supposed to be holy,  
*I* hate to be bothered and made melancholy  
By *women*, who haunt me with desolate looks  
And speeches, all learned from the temperance books;  
With their wild, sad eyes so full of woe,  
That they make me think of the gulf below;  
With sighs and sobs, or, it may be, worse,  
A frenzied oath or a muttered curse,  
That—jeer as I may—will leave a sore  
Which cankers my heart to its very core,  
Or as if, on the sensitive spirit alit,  
A spurt of fire from the depths of the pit.

"They come, these women, with bitter tongues,  
And stories of sorrow, and care, and wrongs,  
Sometimes with children not overly clean,  
Barefooted, bareheaded, ragged, and lean;  
Sometimes with faces as pale as the dead's,  
With garments all faded and worn into shreds,  
And '*You* did it!' they say; '*'twas* the work of your  
*rum!*'

And ‘Give me my husband!’ and ‘Give me my home!’  
Cries one and another, till, what with abuse,  
Sobs, curses, and so forth, all Bedlam seems loose,  
And I, as a friend of good order and peace,  
Must *hustle them out* or *call in* the police.

“I don’t dislike *women*; true feminine grace,  
Sweet voice and sweet temper, a beautiful face,  
Good health, and all that—’tis a very clear case  
That a woman with these things is good *in her place*;  
But her place isn’t *here*, nor in public at all  
(Except at the playhouse, at church, or a ball).  
St. Paul thinks as *I* do—a sound man was Paul—  
And *he* says, ‘The women are bound to be dumb,  
Or, if they *will* talk, do their talking at home!’  
Ah! he knew what was what in the way of propriety,  
And scorned from his heart the cold-water society;  
Believed ‘Woman’s Rights’ all a humbug and flam,  
And preachers in petticoats not worth a dram.

“This is no suitable place, I am sure,  
For a woman to come who is modest and pure;  
Rather free talkers my customers be,  
And sometimes—ha! ha!—why, they shock even *me*!  
*Wife* keeps away; and other men’s spouses,  
*I* think, and *Paul* thinks, should stick to their houses,  
Cook, scrub, and attend to such inner-door cares,  
And not intermeddle with people’s affairs,  
Who care not a copper for them or for theirs.

“Guess men are free agents—they come and they go,  
And it isn’t for me to say ay, yes, or no ;  
As for turning a half-tipsy patron away  
While he wishes for more and has money to pay,  
Perhaps, when I’m rich as old Astor, I may,  
But that, I am sure, will not happen to-day,  
To-morrow, next month, nor the month nor the year  
That comes after that, for my conscience is clear,  
And business is business. He! he! he! he!”  
And he rubbed his hands in demoniac glee.  
“Many a lark I have caught in my net ;  
I have them safe, and I’ll pluck them yet.”

“He! he! he! he!” ’Twas a mocking sound,  
That well might the grog-seller’s soul astound.  
Did it come from the air? Did it come from the  
ground?

Whence was it? What was it? He looked around  
In a terrible perturbation.

This side and that through the smoke peered he ;  
Behind and before, from ceiling to floor,  
From the innermost wall to the outermost door,  
But naught but the chairs could the grog-seller see,  
A few broken bottles, and other *débris*,  
The tokens still left of a roystering spree

Or a drunken jollification.

“Ho! ho! ha! ha!” With a guttural note  
It seemed to come from an iron throat.

But, whatever its source, it was harsh and hoarse,  
With a smack of *diablerie* in it, of course.  
And the grog-seller's knees grew weak by degrees,  
And a dread like Belshazzar's his vitals did freeze,  
While his eyes, in their straining, wide-open remaining  
(That horror enchaining), glared wildly and big,  
And, I dare to declare,  
That each separate hair  
Would have stood up on end had he not worn a wig!

For, lo! in a corner dark and dim,  
Stood an uncouth form with an aspect grim,  
Glowering and grinning by turns at him  
Like a monkey griped by colic.  
From his grizzly head, through his snaky hair,  
Sprouted of hard, rough horns a pair,  
And there was a something in his air  
Which might mean a fight or a frolic;  
For his smiles and his frowns would come and go,  
And redly his shaggy brows below,  
Like sulphurous flames, did his small eyes glow,  
And his lips were curled with a sinister smile  
Expressive of triumph, and mocking, and guile.  
And the smoke belched forth from his mouth the  
while  
With a smell most diabolic.

Dark was his forehead, and rugged and scarred,  
As if by the stroke of the lightning marred,  
Whose fire had burned to the very brain,  
Leaving its record of ceaseless pain;  
And yet, from that torture had been born  
Something of triumph and something of scorn;  
A will to hate, a courage to dare,  
A power all forms of ill to bear,  
And a wild, fierce wrestling with despair.

In the furrowed lines of that ruthless face  
All evil passions had left their trace,  
With never a noble thought to throw  
A soft'ning shade o'er their fiery glow;  
With never a gleam of love to streak  
The lurid gloom of the burning cheek;  
But every muscle and fibre told  
Of a reckless spirit, bad and bold.

Folded and buttoned around his breast  
Was a quaint and silvery-gleaming vest,  
Asbestos, it seemed, but 'tis only guessed  
Why he in a fire-proof garb was drest.  
Perhaps there were reasons that made it the best,  
Such as comfort, or cheapness, or this (with the rest),  
It might, in *his* country, to *fashion* be due  
(But that's nothing to *me*, and I hope not to *you*,  
So we needn't be anxious to know if 'tis true).



Breeches he wore of a brimstone hue,  
From the rear of which a tail peeped through.  
His feet were shaped like a bullock's hoof,  
And the boots he wore were caloric proof.  
From a monster like that one had best keep aloof,  
Nor bed with nor board with beneath the same roof.  
In his hand he bore—if a hand it was,  
Whose fingers were shaped like a vulture's claws—  
A trident, whose prongs, long, jagged, and dull,  
Through the sockets were thrust of a grinning skull;  
Like a sceptre he waved it to and fro,  
As he softly chuckled, "Ha! ha! ho! ho!"  
And all the while were his eyes, that burned  
Like sulphurous flames, on the grog-seller turned.  
There were hates and scorns, there were cunning  
and lies,  
In the curl of the lip and the glare of the eyes;  
And that long-fixed gaze, oh! the grog-seller knew,  
It had more of meaning than met his view.  
And the chuckling voice that filled the room,  
And added gloom to the deep'ning gloom,  
To the grog-seller's ear was the voice of doom.  
Despair and horror were in his look,  
And his cushioned bones to their marrow shook,  
While his shuddering gaze to that monster clung,  
And a fetter, like palsy, was on his tongue.  
But the fiend laughed on, "Ho! ho! he! he!"  
And swished his tail in his quiet glee.

The fiend laughed on, "Ha! ha! ho! ho!"  
And ever the skull waved to and fro.

Then nodding the horns on his grizzly head,  
"Why, what is the matter, my friend?" he said.  
"There surely is nothing in *me* to dread,

That your breath you thus should smother.  
We have known each other so long and well,  
That I love you more than I care to tell—

In fact, I may call you my brother.  
Besides—to your zeal this praise is due—  
Of all my imps there are few—too few—  
That do their tasks with a *relish* like you,

An *appetite* for evil;  
So, unannounced, I have come from—well,  
Perhaps on the whole I had better not tell.  
But an *h*, and an *e*, and an *l*, and an *l*,  
Will suggest to your nostrils a sulphurous smell,  
And bring to your mind the devil."

Like a galvanized corpse, so pallid and wan,  
Up started instanter that horror-struck man,  
And he turned up the whites of his goggle eyes  
With a look half-terror and half-surprise,  
Like an urchin who sees a hobgoblin arise

From the church-yard's fresh-heap'd mound;  
And his tongue was loosed, but his words were few.  
"The—what? You don't—" "Yes; faith I *do*!"

Interrupted Old Nick; "and you'll see that 'tis true."

(He turned him half-way round,  
And brought his caudal appendage to view,  
With its stripes alternate of red and blue  
On a sort of neutral ground.)

"Do you ask, old crony, for further proofs?  
Just twig my terminal, tread on my hoofs,  
And feel of my horns, for—I say it with pride—  
They are not like *yours*, but bony-fied;  
To the very centre sound.

"Having come from a warmer clime below  
To chat with a friend for an hour or so,  
And to help my minions, before I go,  
To make this world like the world of woe,  
In sorrow and sin its brother,  
And the night being somewhat chill, I think  
It were simple politeness to ask me to drink,  
As the grog-sellers do, without stopping to wink,  
Who have gone from one pit—they had not far to sink—  
To set up their shops in another.

These upper-world breezes I find rather rough,  
And somehow my climate don't render me tough,  
So bring me a bumper of double-proof stuff,  
Sweetened with brimstone; a quart is enough  
For a moderate imbibition.

Stir up the mess in an iron cup,  
And heat by the fire till it bubbles up,

And the hot foam hisses over the top;  
For such is the draught of perdition."

As the foul imp bade, so the grog-seller did,  
Filling a flagon with rum to the lid,  
With scrupulous circumspection.

And, when it boiled and bubbled o'er,  
The liquid fire to his guest he bore  
With many a genuflexion.

Nick in a jiffy the liquor did quaff,  
And thanked his host with guttural laugh;  
But faint and few were the smiles, I ween,  
That on the grog-seller's face were seen  
To lighten its deep dejection.

For a mortal fear was on him then,  
And he deemed that the ways of living men  
Should never by him be trodden again;  
That the doom-hour, dark and dismal,  
Delayed so long, in terror had come,  
And his master, too, to call him home,  
Where sulphurous clouds, impervious, dome  
A region of fire abysmal.

His thought went back to the darkened past,  
And he heard wild shrieks on the wintry blast,  
And curses were muttered fierce and fast,  
Till the soul of the wretch was all aghast  
By torturing memories haunted;

And gliding before him, pale and dim,  
Were gibbering fiends and spectres grim,  
Who leered with their dead-cold eyes on him,  
Till his brain in agony seemed to swim,  
And his blood grew chill with a sense of ill,  
Fluttered his pulse, and his heart stood still,  
By a nameless terror daunted.

Listen to me, as I strive to tell  
A part of the vision that then befell.

There was one whose maniac eyes did glare  
Through the tangled veil of his matted hair,  
And he gnawed his tongue in his fierce despair,  
And howled a curse, or muttered a prayer,

Whose sad refrain was ever,  
"Blood! blood! It foams in the cursed bowl!  
It is on my hands! It stains my soul!

It crimsons the sky  
With its terrible dye,  
And the earth which drank it cries, 'More! Give  
more!

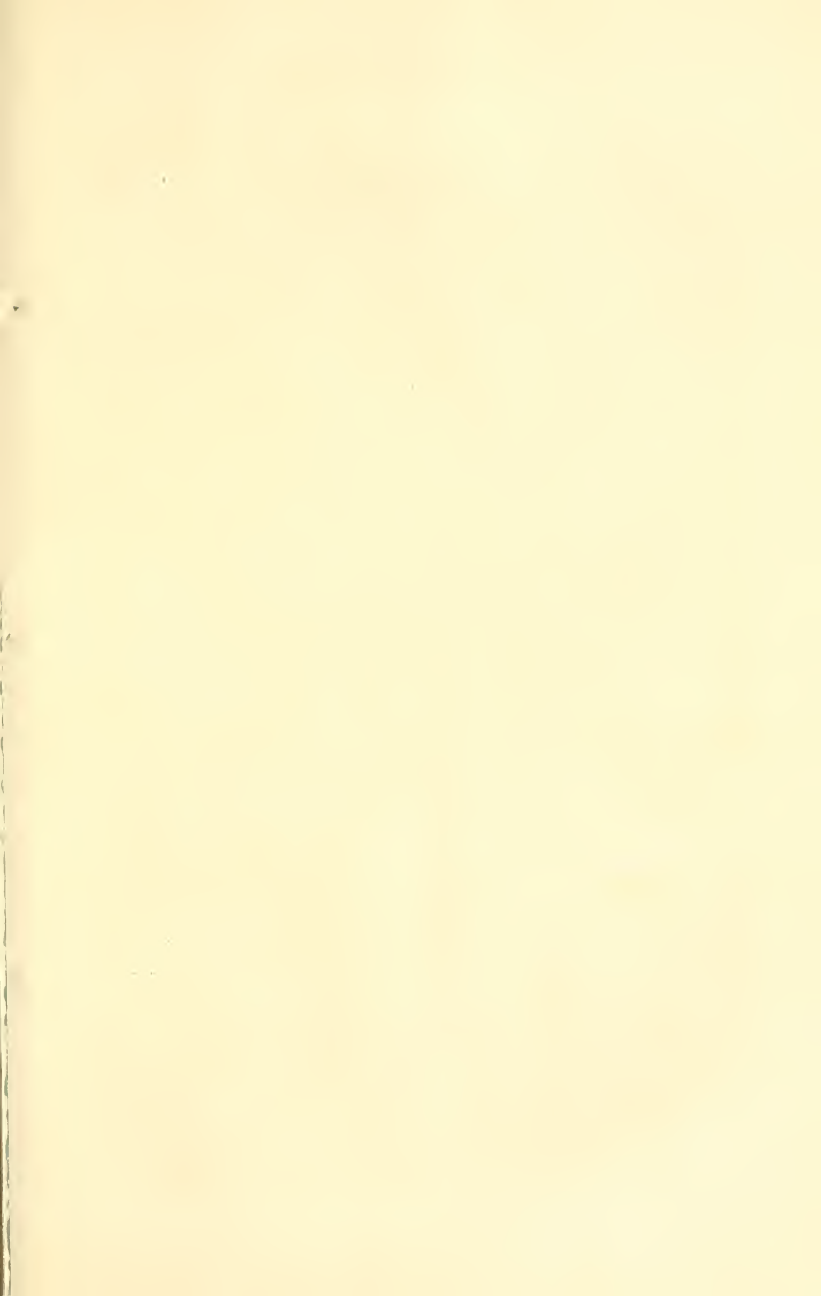
My thirst for the vintage of murder is sore.

Let it flow—let it swell to a river!"

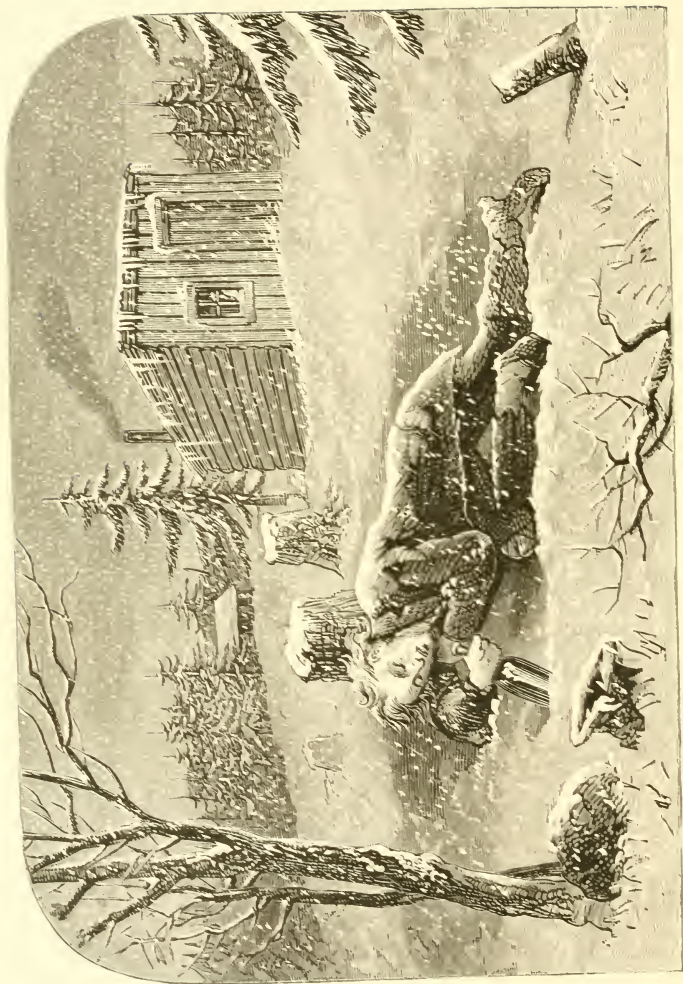
Then, in accents soft and low,  
Murmured he his tale of woe:

"Did I slay thee, dearest wife?

Thee?—oh! better loved than life—







"A FORM LAY STIFF IN THE WINTRY SLEET." Page 25.

Thee, whose smile was like the light  
Flashing o'er my being's night,  
Making what was dark and dull  
Beautiful—how beautiful!

Thee, whose voice was like a bird's,  
Musical with loving words ;  
And whose heart poured out for me  
Love, exhaustless as the sea,  
Fresh as Eden's morning air,  
Guileless as a seraph's prayer,  
Pure as is the purest gem  
In the New Jerusalem!

Did *I* slay thee? Nay; though mine  
Was the hand that dealt the blow,  
'Twas the fiend that in the wine  
Lurks that wrought this utter woe!  
Curses on the wretch who gave  
Me the draught, and thee a grave!"

Backward the thought of the grog-seller ran,  
And a voice in his soul whispered, "*Thou art the  
man !*"

Listen to me, and I will tell  
More of the vision that then befell.

A form lay stiff in the wintry sleet,  
And the winds were weaving his winding-sheet,

And the dull, dead eyes, with a frozen stare,  
Looked up at the sky in their still despair.  
In his nerveless hand was a bottle filled  
With the draught by an evil greed distilled—  
The liquid death that had doubly killed.  
And this—how it makes the demon laugh!—  
Was his monument and epitaph.  
But close at hand, in that hovel old,  
Which the fierce blast shakes as it sweeps the wold,  
A mother and daughter sat hungry and cold.  
They watch and wait for the perished sire  
With the promised boon of food and fire.  
Since early morn he has been away—  
How *creep* the hours!—how long the day  
To those who are left to weep and pray!  
Through the frosty air and the blinding snow,  
With the few coins earned by the toiling wife,  
He sought the bread that should nourish life.  
He found the cup that is drugged with woe—  
Drank deep—and wife, and child, and cot,  
On the bleak, wild moor, were all forgot.  
Wearily, hour by hour, the day,  
Freighted with sorrow, wears away;  
The night glooms down on that suffering pair,  
With its howling storms and its frosted air—  
How dark! how dread!—to their despair!  
Clasped in each other's arms they lie,  
While the night-wind shrieks their lullaby,

And the faint lid droops o'er the glazing eye,  
And over their senses the languors creep  
Of a sleep that lapses to more than sleep.  
What now are hunger and cold to them?  
Or the storm that chants their requiem?  
The dim, gray morning comes again,  
But they shall wake no more to pain.  
The strife is over; their terrors and woes  
Are hushed to endless, deep repose.  
Ay, *theirs* the *peace*; but whose the *crime*  
That sent the father before his time,  
With his soul all stained and his sins unshriven,  
To the drunkard's doom—*no hope, no heaven*—  
And that left the mother and child to die  
Of famine, and frost, and misery?

Backward the thought of the grog-seller ran,  
And a voice in his ear whispered, "*Thou art the  
man!*"

Listen to me, and I will tell  
Yet more of the vision that then befell.

Through the rusted grates of a prison-door,  
Handcuffed and chained to the granite floor,  
With granite walls around and o'er,  
He saw on the damp straw lying

A drunken father, whose hands were red  
With the blood of his boy in madness shed,  
And he muttered, "Dead! ha! ha! he's dead!

'Tis a capital joke—his dying!

What a shriek he gave, for a child so small,  
When his thin skull crashed on the garden wall,  
And the brains gushed out with a crimson jet!

So the fiend is dead. Right well I know

'Twas not my boy; but a fiend below

Who had taken his form, that, unawares,

He might catch us all in his evil snares;

And I said to myself, 'I will baffle him yet!'

So, watching and waiting, at last I heard,

As the evil one, in the boy's disguise,

Came bounding to me with laughing eyes

And arms outstretched—God gave the word,

'Kill—kill the devil!' and it was done,

Though he called 'Papa,' and *seemed* my son—

A good joke that—but I spoiled his fun

When I dashed his head on the flinty stone."

While thus, with his hot brain crazed by rum,

He babbled his strange delirium,

Hard by in a hut was a woman, pale

With anguish and fasting, whose bitter wail

Freighted with dolor the midnight gale,

As she bent in helpless sorrow

Over a child-corpse, still and fair,

With the blood-stain on his golden hair,

And his blue eyes filmed, but still astare,  
Fixed in a motionless horror.  
There were no tears in the mother's eye;  
Her hueless cheek was hot and dry;  
But, oh! how deep was her agony  
As she sat there with her dead alone.  
And now with a low and bitter moan,  
And now with a shriek whose piercing tone  
Was the knell of peace for ever flown,  
She murmured over and over again,  
These words so full of woe and pain,  
“*My murdered boy! My murdered boy!*”

With him hath perished her whole of joy;  
And the world henceforth is dark to her,  
And yet not long, for ere rain and sun  
Have greened the grave of her beautiful one,  
She shall rest by his side in the shade of the fir.

A maddened father—a murdered child—  
A desolate mother with anguish wild—  
Crime, wrong, and woe, exceeding thought,  
Whose hand hath the threefold ruin wrought?

Backward the thought of the grog-seller ran,  
And a voice in his soul whispered, “*Thou art the  
man!*”



Listen to me, and I will tell  
Still more of the vision that then befell.

In a gorgeous room, where the rich brocade  
Threw over the walls a softened shade,  
A youth on a crimson couch was laid,  
But not in peaceful dreaming;  
For the hot blood throbbed through every vein,  
And the fires of madness scorched his brain,  
And phantom fiends, a ghastly train,  
With every loathly seeming,  
Grotesque, and foul, and horrible forms,  
Came crowding in pairs—in flocks—in swarms—  
With laughters and curses, and taunts and jeers,  
To torture his soul and to deafen his ears,  
Till every wave of the pulsing air  
He deemed was stirred  
By a single word  
Reiterant ever—“*Despair! despair!*”  
By his side a good man knelt to pray,  
And strove to lure his soul away  
From its fancies dark to the hope of heaven;  
But, still to his every word of prayer  
Some imp would mutter, “*Despair! despair!*”  
And the wretch gasped faintly: “Too late! too late!  
I have wooed, so leave me to wed my fate—  
Bereft of hope and reprobate,  
To die unshrined and unforgiven!”

“Nay,” said the man of God. “His grace  
Exceeds our guilt; none seek his face  
Through penitence and prayer in vain.”  
From his couch the maniac leaped, his hand  
Stretched with a gesture of command,  
And with a hoarse voice, whose intense  
Yet fierce and passionate eloquence  
Thrilled through the hearer’s heart and brain,  
While the beaded sweat on his forehead stood,  
And the foam on his lips was tinged with blood,  
He said, in his wild, despairing mood:

“Vex me no more with idle prayer!  
For other ears your sermons keep!  
I know the whole of hell’s despair—  
Through all my veins its horrors creep!  
I stand within its burning caves,  
Beyond the reach of Mercy’s call,  
And hear the dash of fiery waves  
Against its adamantine wall!

“Ha! how they seethe, and hiss, and roar!  
What sobs, and shrieks, and anguish cries  
Swell up and make the lava shore  
Articulate with agonies!  
How all the roaring gulf is crammed!  
How the red fire-snake gnaws and gnaws,  
And fold on fold coils round the damned,  
Who howl beneath its crushing jaws!

“See! swarming up in countless crowds,  
Fiends, foul with all pollutions, rise;  
The dead, too, in their rotting shrouds,  
Leer at me with their stony eyes!  
Upon their bones the black flesh creeps,  
Stirred by the crawling life beneath.  
Ha! ha! the dainty grave-worm keeps  
His revel in the halls of Death!

‘Off! off! O God! how close they press  
The blue lips of the dead to mine!—  
A skeleton’s abhorred caress.  
Off, devil! I will *not* be thine!  
They come—they swarm—they fill the room—  
All shapes of horror throng the air!  
I stifle in the deep’ning gloom—  
Ah! this is hell and hell’s despair!

“In vain from side to side I turn;  
Fiends, fleshless forms, and tortured souls  
Howl, grin, and shriek, and fierce eyes burn  
Into my brain like living coals!  
See! how the snakes around me cling,  
Slimy and foul, with loathed embrace,  
My flesh to pierce with fang and sting,  
And hiss their venom in my face!

“Dark—dark—why, I am *dead*! I hear  
The sods upon my coffin fall.

They cease; and now how still and drear  
The grave will—faugh! I feel the crawl  
Of the cold worms—across and through  
My flesh they creep—and creep—and still  
Feast as they go! I never knew  
*Such* horror even the lost could thrill.

“Away! How roars that sea of flame!  
How, on its surges, writhe and toss  
The old companions of my shame—  
Henceforth companions of my loss!  
Howl! curse! blaspheme! ye tortured souls!  
With God nor fiend will prayer avail;  
Breast the hot wave that o’er you rolls,  
And swell its storm-crest with your wail!

“Once riot and delirious mirth  
Crowned the wild revel of desire,  
Now shames and agonies come forth  
To hunt, like hounds, their wretched sire.  
Once how we mingled jest and song!  
Now groan, and shriek, and fiendish yell  
Rise and reverberate along  
The chambers of profoundest hell!

“O endless woe! O ceaseless strife!  
O deathless death!—the sentient soul  
Cheated of everlasting life  
By the foul demon of the bowl!

Such gifts are thine, thou mocker, wine—

The fierce despair, the deep'ning gloom,

The horror, and the hate malign,

The fear, the torture, and the doom!"

Exhausted by his passion's storm,

Down sank the maniac drunkard's form.

A sob—a shiver—see! despair

Is in the eyeballs' settled glare.

Oh! veil the face, for death is there.

When inquisition HE makes for blood,

Who, of earth's gathered multitude,

Shall be found with the price of the victim slain,

And on his garment the murder-stain?

Backward the thought of the grog-seller ran,

And a voice in his soul whispered, "*Thou art the  
man!*"

And other phantoms, some sad and pale,

Some bloody and fierce, with a voice of wail,

Now soft as the zephyr, now hoarse as the gale,

Swept by in sad procession;

Each pointing a finger at him as it passed,

Each muttering "So! we have met you at last!

And vengeance shall come with the speed of the blast,

And press like a sleuth-hound, unerring and fast,

Evermore on the track of transgression."

No wonder the blood in his veins ran chill;  
That his tongue no longer obeyed his will;  
That his weak knees smote and his heart stood still  
Before that awful vision.

But his grim guest laughed with a cold, dry laugh,  
One-half of scorn, and of triumph half,  
And muttered a word that was much like "*Calf!*"

In a tone that was much like derision.  
Then said: "Ho! ho! 'tis a welcome cold  
You give to a friend so true and old,  
Who has been for a score of years or more  
(Though now the fact you would fain ignore)

Your counsellor and crony;  
And loaded your counters with numberless shams,  
And diddled your victims with plausible flams,  
And who never to scruples has sacrificed drams  
Nor cared for your customers' wrath two grammes

So long as they brought you their money.  
But we'll not disagree, for 'tis easy to see  
(Though not to account for) you tremble at *me*,  
And are struck with a terrible dizziness.

Do you think I have come for you? Never fear!  
You can't be spared for a long while here.  
And I'm not so green as to interfere

With the chap who is doing my business.

"There are hearts to break; there are souls to win  
From the ways of peace to the paths of sin;

There are homes to be rendered desolate;  
There is trusting love to be changed to hate,  
    And joy to be dimmed by sadness.  
There are hands that murder must render red,  
Hopes to be blasted, and blight to be shed  
Over the young, and the pure, and fair,  
Till their lives are darkened by despair,  
    Or linked to a cureless madness.

“This is the work you have done so well—  
Cursing the earth with a curse more fell  
    Than war, or famine, or pest;  
Quenching the light on the inner shrine  
Of the human soul, till the spark divine  
Flickers and dies, and the rest is mine,  
    Scourged more than my evil best.  
Want and sorrow, disease and shame,  
And crimes which even *I* shudder to name,  
To which arson, and murder, and rape are tame,  
    You send on their awful mission.  
And the ‘pain’dedst fiend’ laughs loud to see  
How they dance and howl in their horrid glee  
Around the spirits you’ve marked for me—  
    The harvest of perdition.

“Oh! selling of rum is the best device  
To make Gehenna of Paradise.



Wherever may roll the fiery flood,  
It is swollen with tears, it is crested with blood,  
And with wrecks—how numberless!—laden.  
The voice that was heard erewhile in prayer,  
With its muttered curses stirs the air,  
And the hand once prompt to shield from ill,  
In its drunken wrath is raised to kill  
Or wife, or sire, or maiden.

“Hold on your course! You are filling up  
With the wine of the wrath of God your cup;  
And not till that cup is overbrimmed  
Shall the light of life for you be dimmed.  
The fiends exult in their home below,  
As you deepen the pangs of human woe,  
And sow broadcast through every clime  
The seeds whose fruitage is shame and crime.  
Oh! long will it be, if I have *my* way,  
Ere the night of death shall close your day,  
For, to pamper your lust of the glittering pelf,  
You fairly outdevil the devil himself.”

No more said the fiend, for clear and high  
Rang out on the air the watchman's cry,  
“Past five, and a cloudy morning!”  
With a choking sob and a stifled scream,  
The grog-seller waked—it was all a dream,  
But so true to the life, that he well might deem  
That it came with a woe or a warning.

His grizzly guest with the horns had flown;  
His lamp was out, and his fire had gone;  
And dubious still if he were alone,  
If this were his shop or a vaulted tomb,  
He peered through the gloom of the dingy room;  
But he heard no voice of a *coming doom*,  
Nor the mingled sounds of laughter and groan,  
Nor the clatter of bone with its kindred bone  
As skeleton walks with skeleton.

And he saw no imp, save an ill-favored elf  
Who stared from the mirror that stood on the shelf,  
Still stared, at his staring, point-blank on himself;  
But the face was a coward's, all ghastly with fear,  
And a mean face, too, though it seemed rather queer,  
As if somewhere and somehow, on sea or on shore,  
He had seen either *it* or its brother before.

"No matter," he muttered, and soothing his head.

"At least, I am here out of Tophet," he said.

"But the vision—the dream—ha! is it a dream?

What means it?" And sadly he went to his bed;

But no Sleep with her cup from the Lethean stream

Bent over him there—he was restless with dread!

## DASH THE WINE-CUP AWAY!

DASH the wine-cup away ! though its sparkle should  
be

More bright than the gems that lie hid in the sea ;  
For a siren, unseen by thine eyes, lurketh there,  
Who would lure thee through pleasure to woe and  
despair.

Some who once walked with *us* with untremulous feet  
Have yielded their souls to that lovely deceit,  
And, forfeiting honor and manhood, have died,  
In the glow of their youth and the flush of their pride.

And others still linger to darken a name  
Once brightened with love, but now wedded to shame ;  
Poor tempest-tost wrecks on the ocean of woes,  
The grief of their friends and the scorn of their foes.

Wherever the cup of confusion is poured,  
In the cellar of want or at luxury's board—  
From palace and cottage, from hovel and hall,  
A wail goeth up to the FATHER of all !

Then rally! then rally! ye wise and ye good,  
Come up in your strength, and roll back the dark flood  
Ere your treasures are wrecked in its desolate path,  
As it sweeps o'er your homes in its terror and wrath—

Ere the woe shall be yours which smote Ephraim  
of old,

And our glory shall be like a tale that is told,  
And the wolf, coming back to our cities, shall howl  
To the mournfuler cry of the bittern and owl!

## THE DEMON OF INTEMPERANCE.

MY native land! amid thy cabin homes,  
Amid thy palaces, a demon roams:  
Frenzied with rage, yet subtle in his wrath,  
He crushes thousands in his fiery path;  
Stalks through our cities unabashed, and throws  
Into the cup of sorrow bitterer woes;  
Gives to the pangs of grief an added smart,  
With keenest anguish wrings the breaking heart,  
Drags the proud spirit from its envied height,  
And breathes on fondest hopes a killing blight;  
Heralds the shroud, the coffin, and the pall,  
And the grave thickens where his footsteps fall!

Ho for the rescue! ye whose eyes have seen  
The ruin wrought where Drunkenness hath been  
Ye who have gazed upon the speechless grief  
Of early widowhood that mocked relief—  
Ye who have heard the orphan's struggling sigh,  
When, mad with agony, he prayed to die—

Ye who have marked the crimes and shames that  
    throng,  
Like sateless fiends, the drunkard's way along—  
Ye who can tell his everlasting doom  
When darkly over him shall close the tomb.  
Up for the conflict! let your battle-peal  
Ring on the air as rings the clash of steel;  
When, rank to rank, contending armies meet,  
Trampling the dead beneath their bloody feet!  
Up! ye are bidden to a nobler strife,  
Not to destroy, but rescue human life;  
No added drop on misery's cup to press,  
But minister relief to wickedness;  
To give the long-lost father to his boy—  
To cause the widow's heart to sing for joy—  
Bid plenty laugh where hungry famine howls,  
And pour the sunlight o'er the tempest's scowls—  
Bring to the soul that to despair is given  
A new-found joy—a holy hope of heaven!

## HYMN OF THE REFORMED.

CAPTIVES to sin and sunk in shame,  
To all a loathing and a pest,  
With shattered health and blighted name,  
Alike unblessing and unblessed ;  
Demons who made our homes a hell,  
Where passions howled, like fiends below,  
Where all the crimes and shames that swell  
The catalogue of human woe ;

Such were we—and could men be worse ?  
Friends from our pathway turned aside,  
Foes muttered in our ear their curse,  
And children saw us to deride !  
Before us yawned the drunkard's grave,  
Curtained in midnight's starless gloom :  
Who from its greedy jaws could save,  
Who snatch us from the drunkard's doom ?

Such were we—victims of despair !  
For Hope, with folded wing, had died ;

Hell moved to meet us, and the air

Quivered the shouts of fiends, who cried :

“Ah! ha! and have ye fallen thus?

Ye who exulted in your strength,

Hurled from your heights, have ye, like us,

Become the spoiler's prey at length?”

But this is past. The woe, the tears,

The fiery weight on heart and brain,

The anguish and the shame of years—

Only their memory doth remain!

The serpent's bite, the adder's sting,

Pass with the poison-cup away ;

And waters bubbling from the spring,

Sparkling and pure, our thirst allay.

LORD GOD OF HOSTS! to thee belong

Thanksgiving and the voice of praise ;

Thine eye beheld, thine arm was strong

The drunkard from the pit to raise!

Saved from our vice, to life restored,

To home, to wives, to children given,

We praise thee for thy goodness, LORD!

And pray, Oh! lead us to thy heaven.



## THE BARDS OF BACCHUS.

THEY may sing of the joys in the wine-cup that dwell,  
And in music the raptures of drunkenness tell,  
And over the filth of debauchery throw  
The splendor of genius to cover their woe;  
Believe not their tale, nor the falsehood repeat,  
Though the lie be in verse and its music most sweet.  
From the song that's inspired by a bottle of wine,  
Though 'tis sung by Love's lips, turn away, brother  
mine.

Do they think, when they babble of pleasures that  
spring  
From the vintage-crowned bowl, that we know not  
the sting  
Of the serpent that hides in the beaker, though bright,  
Is the sparkle that plays round its brim, like the light?  
Do they tell of the fevers, the headaches, that, born  
Of the midnight's excess, crown the debaucher's morn?  
Of the pockets collapsed? of the rubicund nose?  
Of the rheum in the eyes? and the gout in the toes?

Not they—precious souls! it would ruin the verse;  
And why should they make what is bad enough  
worse?

It would topsy-turvy a cart-load of rhyme,  
And convict them of *sense*, which, in such bards, is  
crime;

Lewd songs and lewd singing, alas! would be o'er;  
Nor gin-guzzling Byron, nor wine-bibbing Moore,  
Be held up as patterns for bardlings who think  
That the fountain of songs is a can of strong drink!

Let them sing what they list—let live as they will,  
And worship old Bacchus and guzzle his swill;  
And dream, if they can, that the joy which they find  
In the madd'ning debauch is a balm to the mind  
They may cheat their own souls with their songs and  
their lies,

But the boys of the *Pledge*, they have ears and have  
eyes—

By the wine-cup untempted, *their* song shall still be,  
“*The Fountain shall furnish the Drink of the Free!*”

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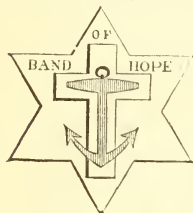
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